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This Week:

- Award recognizes cost savings in ferry-construction program
- New federal funding for WSF
- U.S. Second Lady Jill Biden roundtable
- Meeting with U.S. Coast Guard Vice Admiral Zukunft
- Edmonds rail traffic rally
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- Mariners ferry weekend – the countdown is on

Award recognizes cost savings in ferry-construction program

This week the American Association of State and Highway Transportation Officials presented WSDOT with the regional “Under Budget, Large Project” category award in the [America's Transportation Awards](#) competition. The award recognizes WSDOT for building [three 64-car, 750-passenger vessels](#) in 42 months – exceptionally quick by shipbuilding industry standards – and nearly \$7 million under budget. The Chetzemoka, Salish and Kennewick were constructed to restore service on the Port Townsend/Coupeville route and to allow for the retirement of WSF's oldest vessel, the 65-year-old Rhododendron. WSF used an existing vessel design, shortening the preliminary engineering timeline from nearly 15 months to six months. Work was divided among four state shipyards to further expedite ferry construction and assembly. This sustained jobs for the shipbuilding industry in Washington and helped shore up local economies. WSDOT is now entered into a competition for one of two national awards that carry \$10,000 in prizes. We are proud to recognize WSF staff and Vigor Shipyards who made this award possible.

New federal funding for WSF

Last week the U.S. Congress passed a federal transportation bill that will provide approximately \$40 million for WSF over the next two years. This new source of funding will be a tremendous benefit to the ferry system. The average age of Washington's ferries is significantly older than other major U.S. ferry systems, making our maintenance and infrastructure replacement costs higher. Funding will be used to renovate, replace and/or upgrade vessel components and systems including steel structures, interior spaces, piping, propulsion, major mechanical/electrical, communication/navigation/lifesaving and security equipment. Specific upcoming tasks which this project may cover include hull and topside paint and restoration of sea valves and propulsion systems. These funds will also help support WSF's ongoing efforts to retrofit and improve vessels for greater fuel economy, making our ferry system more efficient and better able to deal with rising fuel costs, which have added substantially to our operating budget. The funding will also help pay for the Southworth Timber Trestle & Terminal Replacement Project, currently scheduled for construction in 2015-2018, and for propulsion system and navigation equipment for the [new Olympic Class \(144-car\) ferries](#).

U.S. Second Lady Jill Biden roundtable

On Monday I had the honor of attending a roundtable discussion led by U.S. Second Lady Jill Biden. Dr. Biden visited South Seattle Community College's hangar at Boeing Field in Seattle as part of a national “Community College to Career” tour, highlighting how businesses are working with community colleges to ensure that students succeed in the workforce. Industry leaders in aviation-aerospace, maritime and manufacturing joined successful graduates to participate in this event. I spoke about WSF's vessel maintenance internship program, a partnership with the Seattle Maritime Academy. I would like to thank WSF employee Jim Sturgul, an oiler on the Tacoma and graduate of the Seattle Maritime Academy, for

joining me to participate in this event. This program is critical to ensuring a strong and capable workforce on our vessels.

Meeting with U.S. Coast Guard Vice Admiral Zukunft

On Wednesday I appreciated the opportunity to ride the Seattle/Bainbridge Island route with U.S. Coast Guard Vice Admiral Paul Zukunft. Vice Admiral Zukunft is Commander of the Coast Guard Pacific Area, where he serves as the operational commander for all U.S. Coast Guard missions within the half of the world that ranges from the Rocky Mountains to the waters off the east coast of Africa. He concurrently serves as Commander, Defense Force West and provides Coast Guard mission support to the Department of Defense and Combatant Commanders. I appreciated the opportunity to share with Vice Admiral Zukunft about WSF's operational issues, our cooperation with the Coast Guard, and our safety and security issues.

Edmonds rail traffic rally

On Wednesday I spoke at a rally concerning rail conflicts at our Edmonds terminal. Last year the Edmonds/Kingston ferry route carried nearly four million riders and two million vehicles. It is our second-heaviest-used route, and is one of the busiest WSF routes for commercial traffic. The rail traffic immediately in front of our terminal is a challenge today, and with continued growth in rail traffic, we anticipate it to be a continuing challenge. In recognition of the longstanding conflict between rail and ferry traffic, we have adjusted our sailing schedule by eliminating a couple of sailings per day. Transportation, including rail, is vital to the health of the economy. WSDOT has a good relationship with Burlington Northern Santa Fe, the owner of the rail line, and long term, all the partners need to work on these issues to ensure the economic vitality not only of Edmonds but, through connection via WSF, north Kitsap County.

Golf on the ferry?

Last weekend if you rode the Seattle/Bainbridge route in the afternoon or early evening, you may have been able to take advantage of a promotion with one of our new advertisers, City Target. Representatives set up [mini golf stations on board](#) and gave ferry riders a chance to win a \$5 gift card for a hole in one. Advertising brings in much-needed, non-farebox revenue for the ferry system, and this promotion also provided some fun for our customers! There's another opportunity to participate in this promotion at the end of this month. City Target will have mini golf stations on a vessel on the Seattle/Bainbridge route on Thursday through Saturday, July 26-28.

Mariners ferry weekend – the countdown is on

The countdown has begun: we're five weekends away from WSF weekend at Safeco Field, when ferry employees, customers and friends can watch the Seattle Mariners take on the Minnesota Twins at discounted ticket prices. Don't miss out on this once-a-year event: August 17-19. [Buy your tickets now](#) and catch a game with us. If you reserve a ticket for the Friday, Aug. 17 game, you'll receive a special T-shirt when you show up at the game.

Next Week:

- Washington State Transportation Commission meeting

David Moseley's weekly updates are available on the WSDOT Ferries Division website at www.wsdot.wa.gov/ferries/weekly.

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